

TREATISE

FOR

THIS AGE:

Occasioned by a Letter written by one Mr. *Woolsey* prisoner in *Norwich*, to the then-exiled Church at *Amsterdam*; in which he endeavours to prove it unlawful to eat *blood*, *things strangled*, and *things offered to idols*, now in the times of the Gospel.

Which Letter is by the consent of the said Church answered; the Grounds and Reasons therein, examined and refuted; and the contrary thereunto proved from Scripture:

By { *Francis Johnson* Pastor
 Henry Ainsworth Teacher } Of the same
 Daniel Studley } Elders } Church.
 Samuel Mercer }

Written long since, but never published till now.

Gal. 5. 1. Stand fast in the liberty that Christ hath made you free; and be no more entangled in the yoke of bondage.

Col. 2. 16, 17. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath day; which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ.

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To the Reader.



He Lord hath been pleased, in his tender
 mercy towards his Church, in all ages, to
 raise up faithful instruments, as these
 whose names are set to this Treatise; e-
 specially that faithful godly man, Mr.
 Henry Ainsworth, who appeared,
 whilst he lived, a bright Star in Christ's right hand, la-
 bouring abundantly in the work of the Lord, in opening
 the Scriptures; as his Commentaries on the five books of
 Moses, the book of Psalms, and the Song of Songs, do
 manifest; as likewise, his Communion of Saints,
 Counter-poyson, and Defence of holy Scripture;
 together with his Trying out of Truth, Arrow against
 Idolatry, and divers other Treatises written by him, in
 defence of the truth of God, like a faithful Shepherd, who
 never fled from the flock over which the holy Ghost had
 made him overseer, but like a valiant * souldier of Jesus * ^{2 Tim. 2.}
 Christ riding upon the white horse of his Word, under the ^{3. Rev.}
 conduct of Christ our * Captain, fought the good fight of ^{19. 14.}
 faith, and finished his course: so that I may boldly say, ^{* Heb. 1. 10}
 by what I have heard from some that remain alive, who ^{Heb. 1. 4.}
 saw his life and death, and by what I have read in his
 works, that he hath received a crown of righteousness;
 and as the Apostle saith of Abel, whose works were righ-
 teous, that he being dead, yet speaketh; so in like manner,
 though he be dead, yet he speaketh in his works, as in o- ^{See the 3}
 ther, so in this Treatise; God having given him a gift ^{Books of}
 in opening the mysteries contained in the Law of Shadows. ^{Moses, and}
 Many in these days are troubled about the eating of blood, ^{Ains. Notes}
 things strangled, and things offered to idols: wherein I ^{on them.}
 doubt not, through the blessing of God, if this Treatise
 be read with a single eye, here will appear many reasons

To the Reader.

deduced from Scripture, satisfactory to any doubting soul in that particular, who owns the Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, according to the advice of the holy Ghost, To the law and to the testament, wherein is revealed the whole counsel of God: so that men need not say in their hearts, who shall ascend into heaven, &c. as if the Lord had not left in his written Word a perfect rule for all his Saints to walk by in the order of his Gospel, and to resolve all doubts. And hereby Satan gets advantage to ruinate the communion of Sains, in that they are carried about with every wind of doctrine, till through confusion they even deny the Lord that bought them; slighting his Word, that shall judge them one day, calling it a dead letter, owning nothing as the Word, but Christ; though the Scripture saith, Every word of God is pure. But those that thus slight the Scripture, believe it not: for those that believe it, and receive it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, find its effectual work in them, as a light shining in a dark place. David saith, Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way: For the law of thy mouth [is] better unto me then thousands of gold and silver. I rejoyce at thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil. Also Job also saith, I have esteemed the words of his mouth more then my necessary food. If Gospel-professors would thus esteem of the words of God, surely there would not be such distraction amongst them. I shall say no more in commendation of the Authors of this Treatise, (though praise is comely for the upright) but desire the Lord to set home what is here written, to the hearts of all those that are troubled in this point, and preserve his elect from the dangerous Errours of these times, keeping their garments always white, that they may be found worthy to enter into the joy of their Lord. Amen.

T. W.



The Elders and Brethren of the English Church in Amsterdam, To Mr. Woolsey prisoner in Norwich, wisdom and grace be multiplied by Christ, to acknowledge and walk in Christ, as we have received commandment from the Father.



It is a part of our joy and comfort, (amidst the many afflictions allotted us in this life) to behold the truth of the Gospel prevaile with those that are upright of heart, and tread with a right foot in the practise of the same: so it is no little grief to see or hear of the declining of any from the strait paths of the Lord, to either hand: of which sort there is great store this day, (as always hath been before time) Touching whom we may complain to the Lord with the Prophet, * *Thou hast multiplied the Nation, but hast not increased the joy.* Isa. 9. 3.

And you which in your late Letter unto us blame the diversities of Opinions in the small number of those that are Separated from the Idolatrous Church, as errors and lies, dissonant and contrary to the whole truth of God, and true libertie of the Gospel, &c. should have laid to heart your own words, and spared to publish so dangerous an error, under pretence of clearing your selfe (as you say) both of error and heresie. But as all the rivers of *Damascus* could not wash away *Naamans* Leprosie, so neither can all the reasons that you have rendered, excuse or cleanse your Doctrine from the contagion of heresie; if you persist and go forward thus to hold

2 Kings 5.

hold your selfe, to perswade and thrust upon others, your abstinence from meats, which is reckoned by the Holy Ghost for a Doctrine of Devils, 1 Tim. 4. 1. 3.

Touching which point, although you have had heretofore sufficient answer (wee doubt not) by that faithful Martyr of
 * Prov. 10. 7. blessed memorie Mr. *H Barrow*, wherein as you ought and should, so we might and would rest, without making further reply: Yet because wee have (for the present) no Coppy of those writings, that might witnesse for us hereafter, neither as we thinke were they sent unto you in the name of the whole Church then at *London*, we have now written briefly what God hath given us to see in this matter; hoping that this joynt sentence of our Church, confirmed by the Word of the Lord, will take effect, (through his grace) for the diswading and reclaiming of you from your Errour; otherwise, that you may have the lesse excuse in the day of Christ. And God which hath taught us from our youth until now, forsake us not, even in our old-age and gray heads, till we have declared his Gospel unto this generation, and the truth thereof to so many of those that are to come, as it shall please him.

Psal. 71.
17, 18.

The Doctrine which in your Letter you would maintain for the truth of God, *wherein you are obedient unto him* (you say) *as all others must be, that truly fear his Name*, is, *That you will not willingly eat blood, nor things strangled, nor things offered to Idols.*

For the abstaining from Bloud, you alleadge three Reasons. 1. *The commandment of God to Noah*, Gen. 9. 4. 2. *His commandment by Moses to Israel*, Deut. 12. 16. Levit. 17. 13, 14. And 3. *by the whole company of the Apostles, Elders and brethren at Jerusalem, to the Churches of the Gentiles*, Acts 15. 23, 28, 29.

From which you conclude, that it remaineth *firm and sure to this day, as any other testimonies of holy Scripture to be observed of all the faithful till the coming of Christ*. After this, you make answer to certain *mis-alleadgings* (as you call them) *of other Scriptures against this truth*.

1. And first, for the commandment given to *Noah*, you write
 that

that nothing hath been or can be said against it. Whereto we answer, that we have cause to doubt of your fidelity, when you affirm nothing hath been said; and to blame your confidence, for avouching nothing can be said against the perpetuity of that commandment. And for the first, (to free your self of suspicion) we pray you send us a true and perfect Copie of all that Mr. Barrow (to omit others) did write unto you: for there we are perswaded something hath been said against it. For the later, we wish you to follow the counsel of the holy Ghost, that saith *a*, *Understand according to sobriety; and be not* ^{a Rom. 12. 3. 16.} *wise in your self*; considering that the Word of God *b* came ^{b 1 Cor. 14. 36} *not out from you, neither came it unto you onely*. The abstinence from blood commanded to *Noah*, we hold to be temporary, and was then a figure for the time present, but is now disannulled *c* for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof: ^{c Heb. 7. 18.} And that for these Reasons.

1. Because the other observations of Religion in those times before the Law was given by *Moses*, were for the outward things figures and shadows *d*, as building of Altars, offering ^{d Gen. 8. 20. & 12. 7.} of Sacrifices, *e* difference of beasts clean and unclean, *f* paying of Tythes, offering of *g* First-fruits, *b* Circumcision, and ^{e Gen. 7. f Gen. 14. 20. &c. 28. 22.} sundry the like. So that it helpeth not to say abstinence from blood was commanded before the Law of *Moses*, and therefore is now to continue, more then it will help a Jew to say, ^{g Gen. 4. 4. b Gen. 17. i Joh. 7. 22.} *Circumcision, &c.* was commanded before *Moses* Law, (Yea Christ himself saith *i* it was not of *Moses*, but of the fathers) therefore it is to continue still.

2. We understand (according to that small measure of light which God hath given us in those dark shadows) that abstinence from blood was a figure of our sanctification, and that in three respects. 1. The first concerning Gods Worship and Service, which that it might with the more holiness and reverence be used and regarded, he would have some special things not profaned or in common use of men. So he forbade the making or using of that holy Oyl wherewith his Sanctuary and Priests were anointed, *Exod. 30. 23, 31-33.* and the like of that precious Perfume, *Exod. 30. 37.* Also, he forbade them to eat that fat of beasts which they should burn on the altar

altar to the Lord; *Levit. 7. 25.* And that the blood was forbidden also in this regard, appeareth by *Levit. 17. 11.* *For that the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you* (saith the Lord) *for an atonement for your souls:* So that the common eating of any blood might have bred in them a contempt of the price of their atonement, which was in

**Heb. 9. 14* figure the blood of beasts, but in truth the * blood of Christ. And for as much as this sacrificing of Beasts was in *Noahs* time and † before, it was meet in the wisdom of God, when he gave them flesh to eat, to debar them of the blood, for the cause mentioned.

The second respect concerned thankfulness to God for the use of his creatures which he giveth unto the sons of men. Therefore of them all the Lord reserved one principal part from himself, that thereby his people might acknowledg his goodness. Such was the law of all * first-fruits, *Dent. 26.* which every man was to bring before the Lord, acknowledging *h* his own unworthiness, and Gods mercie in giving him the increase of that good land. In like sort they were forbidden to do any work with their first-born bullock, or sheere their first-born sheep, or eat them elsewhere then before the Lord, *Dent. 15. 19.* Yea, all their own first-born Children they must redeeme, and the very unclean beasts they were to redeem or kill, *Exod. 34. 19. 20.* Every tree that they planted for meat, they might not eat thereof the first three yeares; in the fourth year all the fruit was to be holy to the praise of the Lord, and in the fifth year they did eat, *Levit. 19. 23.* When they eat of the bread of the land, they must offer a cake of the first of the dough, *Num. 15. 19. 20.* and sundry the like. Accordingly do we understand the Lords minde here, that giving them flesh to eat, he restrained the blood, as being a thing wherein they had no interest, but the Lord; for that it was the soul or life, that is the Chiefest part of every beast; and so their restraint from blood to be an occasion for them to praise the Lord, that had permitted them the flesh to eat.

The third respect concerned the love of men each to other, that they should abstain from Cruel affections, and salvage fierceness, and put on the bowels of meekness, gentleness,

com-

compassion, &c. not onely towards their friends, but also their enemies; whereunto they were led by sundry figures; and taught their duties to men, by their behaviour to brute beasts. Of this sort were the abstayning from any bird when they took the eggs or the Yong, *Deut. 22. 6, 7.* The helping of their neighbours (yea their enemies) beast when it is strayed, or lay under the burthen, *Exod. 23. 4, 5. Deut. 22. 4.* The not muzzling of the oxes mouth that trod out the corn, *Deut. 25. 4.* The resting of Beasts on the Sabbath day, *Deut. 5.* with such like. And that the Lord in sparing the blood of Beasts; had regard herein to the blood of men, appeareth by the next words in *Gen. 9. 5.* saying, *And surely I will require your blood wherein your lives are, at the hand of every Beast, &c.* Whereby he sheweth how precious the blood of men was in his eyes, that would punish the shedding thereof both on men and Beasts: and therefore to the end they might forbear the spilling of each others life, he withheld them from eating the life, that is, the blood of Beasts. It might seeme a kinde of cruelty to eat Beasts blood, and want of humane clemencie: wherefore *Solomon* noteth a righteous man even *Prov. 12.* by this, that he regardeth the life of his *Beast*; and addeth *10.* on the contrary, *But the mercies of the wicked are cruel.* By which opposition it appeareth, that God in restraining the life or blood of Beasts, intended hereby to restrain men from cruelty.

3. We hold the abstinence from blood to be figurative and temporarie, upon that which is written *Col. 2. 16, 17. Let no man condemn you in meat and in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or new moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ.* Where he plainly reckoneth meat and drink among other shaddows; and excepteth not any meat, no not blood; nor any feast, no not the Sabbath. If it be said, *Paul* speaketh of meats and drinks under *Moses* law onely, and not of blood, which was forbidden long before to *Noah*; wee answer, 1. that blood was also forbidden in *Moses* law amongst other meats, therefore is *Levit. 17.* here also abrogated among other meats. 2. Again, as much *Deut. 12.* may be said for the Sabbath of the seventh day, as for blood;

B.

yea

Gen. 2. 3,
3.

Gen. 9.
Levit. 17.
Exod. 20.
10, 11.
Exod. 31.
13.

Heb. 11. 3.
Reve. 4. 11.
& 14. 7.
Heb. 4. 10,
11. 1 Thel.
5. 23.

verse. 6.
verse. 5.

yea more, both in regard of the antiquitie, and of the use and end: For the prohibition of blood began but in *Noahs* time, but the seventh day was sanctified from the beginning of the world: so that if blood may be exempted from the Apostles general abrogating of meats, because that edict was more ancient then the Law, then much more may the seventh day be exempted from amongst the other sabbaths, because it was of farre greater antiquitie. The use and end also of the seventh day was more excellent then that of blood: for blood was forbidden (as you alledge) because it was the life of the Beast, but worke on the seventh day was forbidden for a remembrance of the creation of the world, and rest of God; and for a signe that we might know that the Lord doth sanctifie us: so that the end of the sabbath in this respect excelleth the end of blood. And if further it be said (as afterwards in your Letter you urge) that blood was forbidden because it was the life; and seeing it is the life to this day, therefore to this day it may not be eaten: we answer, As much may be said for the Sabbaths; that to this day, and always, a remembrance is to be kept of the creation of the world and rest of God; now and always it is the Lord that sanctifieth us.

Wherefore we conclude from this Testimonie of *Pauls*, that if none may condemn us in respect of the seventh day, more then of the other feasts and sabbaths, so neither may any condemn us for blood, more then other meats or drinks, which were shaddows of things to come, whose body wee have in Christ.

4. That the prohibition of eating blood in *Gen. 9.* was figurative, appeareth by the punishment of murther, there presently annexed; the Lord saying, *Whoso sheddeth mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed.* Yea, at the hand of every Beast (as well as of every man) God required the blood of man. And of the beast he required it thus (as at the publishing of the law appeareth) that the ox which goared to death man or woman should be stoned to death, and the flesh thereof not eaten, *Exod. 21. 28.* And that this was figurative, your self (we think) will not deny; for you mention no scruple thereof in your Letter. But if any would make conscience of suffering

suffering such a beast to live, or eating the flesh thereof, he might fetch his ground from *Noahs* time, as well as you that will eat no blood.

5. It may be shewed to be a Type or shadow, and now abrogated, by the same reason that *Paul* alledged for eating all other meats, saying, *Every thing that is sold in the Shambles, eat ye, making no question for conscience sake; for the earth is the Lords, and the plenty thereof:* which testimonie of *David*, if it be of weight to settle the conscience touching other meats, then of blood also, seeing it is a part of the plenty of the earth, and the Lords, as well as any other thing which now he hath given us free use of by Christ, according as it is written, that this world and all other things are ours; we Christs, and Christ Gods, *1 Cor. 3, 21, 22-23.*

1. Cor. 10.

25, 26.

Psal. 24.

Thus have we shewed you something of that which may be said against the perpetuity of that law in *Gen. 9.* which is the ground of your erroneous building.

The next reason by you alledged from the law of *Moses*, falleth with the former; and by all the arguments which we have brought, is shewed to be *Typical*: and you may aswell deny any other of *Moses* ordinances to be shaddows, as this: Yet you say that *Levit. 17. 11.* is misalledged; where God saith, *For the soul of the flesh it (is) in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls.* If this be misalledged (as you write) and proveth it not to be a shaddow; then we must believe, it is the substance and truth: Then atonement for mens sins is wrought by the blood of Beasts, in deed and truth, not in Type and figure. See whither your error leadeth you. The Holy-Ghost saith, *It is impossible that the Blood of Bulls and goats should take away sins;* *Heb. 10. 4.* but it is the blood of Christ that cleanseth us from all sins, *2 Joh. 1. 7.* Whereas therefore the Law saith, *I have given Beasts blood upon the altar to make atonement for your souls,* it must needs be figuratively spoken. And you are greatly to blame to write as you have done, that this Scripture is misalledged. Yet to qualifie the matter, and help your self; you write, that you confesse as the truth is, that the sacrificial blood had two

causes why it might not be eaten; the one general, because it was the life; the other particular, because it was the atonement. But this is not to confesse as the truth is; for you confesse not at all that it was typical, (which you must do, except you will renounce Christ who is the truth.) Nay, afterward you write very peremptorily that *It was not, is not, nor ever shall be proved, that the not eating of all blood was typical: Yea, that it had not any foot of type or ceremony in it.* And further from the truth is that which followeth in your Letter, *that the cause of forbidding common blood, was one onely, to wit, because it is the life, which remaineth still the cause before the Lord, why it might not be eaten, and shall remaine the cause till the coming of Christ.* Herein you deceive your self, and would deceive others, making a figurative and temporary cause, to be a cause in truth and for ever. For the strength of your reason seemeth to be this: Blood might not then be eaten, because it was the life; the same cause continueth now, for it is the life still, and so shall continue till the coming of Christ: therefore it may not now be eaten. The falsehood of which Argument we will shew you by the like. In *Levis. 11. 7.* God saith, *The swine because it parteth the hoofe, but cheweth not the Cud, it shall be unclean unto you: you shall not eat thereof.* Whereupon the Jew might thus argue; *Of a swine we might not then eat, because it parted the hoof, but cheweth not the Cud, and the same cause continueth still, for to this day the swine parteth the hoofe, but cheweth not the Cud: therefore to this day we may not eat of swines flesh.* Such is your reason against eating of blood, whiles you make the cause to be in the nature of the Creature, which you should put in the will and appointment of the Creator. For why might not Beasts that chewed not the Cud be eaten then, as well as Beasts that did chew the Cud? but because it pleased God to exempt them in Type and figure; for otherwise all Gods Creatures are in their own nature good and cleane, *Gen. 1. 31. Rom. 14. 14.* Even so may it be said, Why might not the blood be eaten as well as the flesh, but because God would exempt it also in Type and figure, as before we have proved? He that said, Ye shall not eat

verse 4.

The like
may be said
for the Sabbath day, as
before we
have shew-
ed.

eat the blood because it is the soul, might also have said (if so it had pleased him,) *You shall not eat the flesh, because it is the body.* But of his mercie he permitted them the flesh, for the comfort of their Bodies; and of his Sovereignty and like mercy, he restrained the blood, for the instruction of their souls, even as by other like shaddows he led them to Christ. If you say the sacrificial blood was a figure, because it was used in the worship of God upon the altar, &c. yet the common blood of all beasts was no figure, for thereof was no use in the worship of God; it is not of weight: for neither was there any use of swine or other unclean Beasts in the worship of God, yet were they all Types and figures, as the Scripture teacheth us, *Alt. 10, 11, 12, &c.* and so we have before proved all blood to be. Unto which proofs we will add this one reason further, and so conclude this point.

The restraint of blood before Christs coming, seemeth to be for the honour of the Son, in whom and by whom the Father would give all good things to his Church, both for soul and body; and without whom we have no right to any thing, having lost our Sovereignty by *Adams* fall. And first, Rom. 16. for spiritual things, *Paul* teacheth us that the *Revelation* 25, 26. *the mystery* (of the Gospel and mans salvation) *was kept secret since the world began, till now* (under Christ) *it is opened and published among all nations by the scriptures of the Prophets*, at the commandment of the everlasting God. Rom. 5. None in heaven or in earth could open the book, or loose the scales, but that *Lyon* of the Tribe of *Juda*: And as heavenly, so earthly things are loosed and restored by Christ. Before his coming, the *Land* of *Canaan* was Gods peculiar possession, and the *Jews* his chosen Heritage: now all the ends of the earth are given to Christ, all peoples and nations are his, no difference either of *Jew* or *Gentile*, male or female, freeman or servant. Gal. 3. 28. In like sort men were debarred of many earthly Creatures before his coming, and were nourished as Children under the School-Master of the law, with *Touch not, taste not, handle not*, and the like restraints: But now all power is given to Christ in heaven and in earth; all things are put in subjection under his feet, sheep and oxen all of them, yea and the 1-Cor. 15. *Beasts* 27.

- 1 Cor. 3. 21, Beasts of the field, the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea:
 22. Gal. 4. and now also by Christ all things are made ours, we being the
 7. Rom. 8. heirs of God through him so that no man may condemn us for
 17. Col. 2. meat or drink; for we know and are perswaded through the
 16. Rom. 14. Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of it self, neither can
 14. Matth. any thing that goeth in at the mouth defile the man. *We may*
 15. 11. *eat the soul of the Beast aswell as the body, for the earth is*
the Lords, and the plenty thereof. 1 Cor. 10. 25. 26. This
 honour hath the Father given to the Son, and the Son to all the
 Saints. Wherefore we conclude, that this forbidding of any
 meat, even of blood, derogateth from the power and liberty of
 Christ, which he hath given to all that believe in his name; and
 1 Tim. 4. 1, so it is a false and pernicious Doctrine, even a Doctrine of devils,
 3. Gal. 4. 9. as *Paul* calleth it, turning men back from Christ, to the beggerly
 rudiments and types of the Law. But you say, *If it had any*
got of Type or ceremony in it the Apostles would never have
 Gal. 2. 5. *forbidden it to the Gentiles, no not for an hour; for that had*
been to bring them into bondage.

It remaineth therefore that now we examine your third reason, and see what it was that they forbad the Gentiles, and for what cause.

verse 5.
 verse 24.
 verse 20.
 verse 39.
 verse 21.

In the 18. of the *Acts* it was determined that those Gentiles whom certaine Pharisees had troubled with words, and cumbred their miads, should be written unto to abstain from pollutions of Idols (that is, things offered to Idols) and fornication, and the strangled thing, and from blood: The reason hereof is also shewed to be this; *For Moses from old times bath them that preach him in every city, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath.* Now the occasion of this Edict, and the end thereof, with all other Circumstances of the same, and the practice of the Apostles and Churches afterwards, all plainly teach us, that this was no permanent law, but for the present time and occasion; not for any unlawfulness in the Creatures themselves, of Idolathites, strangled things, or blood, but for bearing with the *Jews* which were so zealous of *Moses* law, and for the quiet of the Church. And this we confirm by these reasons,

1. Because we find not that such abstinence from meats was

was ever taught by any of the Apostles before this present time and occasion ; which if they had been permanent, and not legal shadows , we are to think they would have preached with other Doctrines of the Gospel.

1. In the disputation about this Question, *Peter* calleth the Doctrine by them urged a tempting of God, *a yoke not able to be born.* *Paul* and *Barnabas* confirme it, by telling the wonders that God had done among the Gentiles by them, without exception or mention of this Doctrine of blood, &c. then *James* approveth in like manner *Peters* words , and would not have the Gentiles troubled, but onely written unto about these things ; and maketh the reading of *Moses* in the Synagogues, a reason thereof ; so that the *Jews* which had been accustomed to *Moses* law from old time , were subject to be offended with these things ; whose weakness was to be born withall so much as might be , as the Apostles did teach by their own example ; for which, see *Acts* 21.20, 21.23, 24. 1 Cor. 9.20.

verse 10.

verse 12.

verse 14,

15. verse 9.

3. The Apostle *Paul* having occasion to deal afterwards with the Church of *Corinth* about one of the things here mentioned, namely *meats sacrificed to Idols*, doth plainly teach that they might eat such meats , if it were not to the offence of any mans conscience ; making this his ground, *that all things were lawful for him . but not all things expedient or edifying.* 1 Cor. 10.23. Wherefore any things sold in the shambles they might buy and eat, and whatsoever was set before them at an unbelievers Table they might eat, asking no question for conscience sake : so that neither things sacrificed to Idols (whereof he there treateth) nor strangled, nor blood , nor whatsoever else that might be prepared at an Infidels bar quet, could defile them with the eating, or Trouble their conscience : and this he proveth by Scripture ; for *the earth is the Lords, and the plenty thereof* : which testimony of *David*, if it be of weight to prove we may eat any meat (as the Apostle alledgeth it to that end) then may we eat things sacrificed to Idols, and strangled, and blood, because they are a part of the plenty of the earth, all which is the Lords, and by *Christ* curs. But for the offence of others he saith, *Eat it not* ; And why? be-

1 Cor. 8.

verse 25.

verse 27.

verse 6.

Psal. 24.1.

1 Cor. 3. 21.

22. 1 Cor.

8. 28.

cause

cause of him that shewed it (saith he) and for that other mans Conscience, not thine own; adding withall, *For why should my liberty be condemned of another mans conscience?* whereby he evidently teacheth, that it is our Christian liberty to eat any thing, even meat sacrificed to Idols; which yet was one of the things forbidden in the 15 of the *Acts*. And would we have a better expounder of that decree then an Apostle, and one that was present and employed in that business, and knew well the occasion and end of such writing to the *Gentiles*, as then was, which by this his Epistle he maketh so plain, as none of any Judgment need doubt what was meant?

Now for your Objections; where first you say, *If it had had any jot of type or ceremony, the Apostles would not have forbidden it to the Gentiles for an hour:*

Verse 4. We answer, that neither did they in that sense that you alledge, from *Gal. 2. 5.* which was a bringing into bondage, and loosing the truth of the Gospel; but in another regard, *for the weakness of their brethren*, they would, did, and might.

For Paul an Apostle writing to the *Romans* which were *Rom. 15. 1.* *Gentiles*, saith, *We which are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak:* and againe, *All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man that eateth with offence; it is good neither to eat flesh, nor drinke wine, nor anything whereby thy brother is offended.* And to the *Gentiles of Corinth* (as before is shewed) he saith, *Eat not meat sacrificed to Idols, for the conscience of him that sheweth thee.* And himself gave an example; who because of the *Jews* that were zealous of the law, purified himself, and offered in the Temple (*Acts 21. 24, 26.*) which we think you will not deny were types and figures.

Next, whereas you say touching *1 Cor. 9. 20.* that Paul became a Jew to the Jew, &c. but he became not a Jew to the *Gentiles*; and if this thing were ceremonial, he must needs be counted to become a Jew to the *Gentiles*, contrary to his own Doctrine and practise, *Gal. 2. 5.* You shew no reason of this your assertion; yea, the contrary is most plain, in that the Commandment, *Acts. 15.* was in the *Jews* behalf, whom
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the Gentiles were to bear with according to *Paul's* example, and with him to become Jews to the Jews, that they might save and not offend them. It is you rather that are become a Jew to the Gentiles, whiles you thus observe, and urge all Christians of the Gentiles to observe the Jewish Types and shadows.

Unto 1 *Tim.* 4. 4. where *Paul* saith, *Every creature of God is good, and nothing ought to be refused.* &c. you answer, that *Christians liberty there is all one and the same, which God gave to Noah, no more nor no less*, when he saith, *Gen.* 9. 3. *Every thing that moveth and liveth shall be meat for you.*

It is strange that you will thus write: For upon that liberty given to *Noah*, there is presently restrained, even in expresse words, the blood of all beasts; but in this place of *Paul*, every creature is permitted, without any manner restraint, either in expresse words, or by any necessary Collection: so that except you will deny blood to be a creature, you cannot deny it to be permitted there of *Paul*. Neither are his words drawn by us further then himself; and other places of Scripture do allow: for we have shewed many Scriptures that confirm this evident truth. But then we must needs affirm (you say) that *Paul* in this behalf was *yea, yea*, with the rest of the Apostles, in *Acts* 15. and by himself *nay, nay*, in his Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*. We answer, there is no need thus to affirm; for he was *yea yea*, in *Acts* 15. for the weakness of his brethren (as before is proved) and so he alwaies continued, even in his Epistles: He was *nay, nay*, against observing legal Types, as touching the things themselves, both in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and in his written Epistles. But you that would bring us back to the ordinances of *Moses*, and would burthen us with traditions of *Touch not, taste not, handle not.* &c. in this your error *nay nay*, not onely to the Epistles of *Paul*, but also to all other Scriptures, as hath been proved.

Finally, where you alledge the confirmation of that decree *Acts* 15. was ratified by *Paul* himself, *Acts* 21. after that the Epistles of *Timothy* and *Titus* were written, and thereupon would inferre that his words in those Epistles are drawe

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Rom. 14.
1 Cor. 10.
Chap. 15.
To Corin.
Gal. Col.
Tim. Titus

further then he intended; it is before answered and proved, that the decree you mention, was but for the time, and for the quiet of the Church, and for the bearing with the Jews; but the Doctrines in *Pauls* Epistles are perpetual, and do concern the creatures themselves, and our liberty in Christ to use them. So that nothing which you have said can turne away the evident force of these Scriptures, which as a sharp sword do wound and cut down this Jewish error, which you to the hurt of your own soul, and trouble of the Church, have renewed in these last dayes; whereof we pray God to give you a sight, and Christian sorrow for the same.

Idolathites.

In the next place, you write of *Idolathites*, or meats sacrificed to Idols, more briefly and more fearefully, as seeming to have a Check in your own conscience. For we agree (you say) in one thing, *that no Christian may eat them in the Idol-temple; but in the second point we differ, that some will eat them when they be brought from thence, though it be shewed them, that they are sacrificed to Idols, not caring who be offended, &c. though the conscience of him that is offended should stay him and his conscience from eating of it, as it is written, 1 Cor. 8. 13. & 10. 28, 29, 30.*

And is the difference between us but in this second point of eating with offence, as you would pretend? Then we hope you will not blame them that eat without such offence. Then is not the thing of it self unlawful, but in regard of the Circumstance: and we which live here, and are not offensive one to another for eating such things, may lawfully eat them, by your own grant. And thus also you yeeld up one of your chiefest forts of your error, to wit, the Edict in the 15 of the *Acts*; for there Idolathites were as fully and absolutely forbidden as blood: whereupon it followeth, that if Idolathites were forbidden but in regard of offending others, then blood also was forbidden but in the same regard. Thus the truth inforceth you in some sort to yeeld: In some sort (we say) for you make no full nor free acknowledgment. You write not *it is lawful to eat them, if it be without offence of others*, neither do you plainly avouch (much lesse prove) the contrary, though both before and after you bewray you erroneously hold

hold the contrary. Before, you said *you will not willingly eat meat sacrificed to Idols* : and after, when you alledge the law of the damned thing, *Dent. 13.* and say that the places to *Timothy* and *Titus* are misalleged in this behalf, as for blood : we have before spoken of that *15* of the *Acts*, and by comparing it with this place of *Paul*, *1 Cor. 10.23.* &c. have proved it to be the minde of the holy Ghost, not to forbid those meats in regard of themselves, but for the present peace of the Church in bearing with the weake. And so plaine is the evidence of this Scripture for it, that your self (which are so diligent to amove all doubts, as you leave not the scruple of fishes blood unanswered) yet can say nothing at all against this. Wherefore we rest in that which hath been already said concerning it. But you alledge that law, *Dent. 13. 17.* *There shall cleave none of the damned thing to thine hand; and say these things are so called;* wherein you quite mistake and misapply the Scripture : For 1. That law is made for such as being of the Church should revolt from God, and fall to Idolatrites, verse 12. 2. Not onely the Beasts, but the men also, with all that they had, were to be flaine, and utterly destroyed; the City to be burnt with fire, and made an heape for ever, and might not be built againe, verse 15, 16. 3. Not onely the beasts, but all other substance of those Idolaters were alike damned things; neither were they onely forbidden to eat the flesh, but to have or use any of their Cattel alive or dead : for nothing of that damned thing might cleave to their hand, verse 17. But such is not the estate of meats offered to Idols; for they may be bought and sold in the shambles, *1 Cor. 10.25.* they may be eaten even at an Infidels Table, without scruple of conscience, verse 27. Because the earth is the Lords and the plenty thereof, and the Idol is nothing, *1 Cor. 8.4-8* & *10.19*, and so cannot defile the good creature of the Lord. Therefore what God by his word hath sanctified, call not you unclean or damned *Acts 10.14.*

Lastly, you refer us to your answer by *Acts 21.15.* unto the places of *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, for this, as well as for blood. And we which before have discussed this point, refer you againe to that which we there wrote in refutation thereof.

Strangled.

As for things strangled, you count them as one thing with blood : for if the thing strangled, were killed by letting the blood from it, it is lawful (you say) to be eaten. This is all you write of it. And we, which before have proved that blood was a figure, and may now be eaten of any Christian, have thereby also proved it lawful to eat of the strangled thing; which is not otherwise unlawful, but for the blood, by your own Confession.

There is yet another place misalleged (you say) by the ignorant, against all these things; and that is Rom. 14. 17. that the Kingdome of God consisteth not in meats and drinks, &c. which place by Paul (as you affirme) was altogether alledged against them that did eat with offence, and not at all against them that did not eat, or were offended with eating such things. Doubtless this place was not alledged so ignorantly as you have answered it : for though Paul applied it to the present particular occasion, yet the position is general, and for ever true, that Gods Kingdome is not meat or drinke : wherefore as it was applyed by the Apostle against them, so may it by us against you : For you by your Letter would teach us the contrary, that the kingdom of God consisteth (if not in drink, yet) in meats, as Idolathites, and strangled, and blood ; which you now urge as a Doctrine

Mark 1. 14 of the Gospel (which is the Gospel of Gods kingdom) to be
 Mat. 23. 38 observed of all Christians (which are the Children of that
 Psalm 2. 6 kingdom) as in obedience to Christ (who is the King of that
 kingdom. And seeing the Law and the Prophets were to
 Luk. 16. 16 John Baptist, and since that time the kingdom of God is
 Acts 28. 31 preached, and Paul. a chief laborer in, and preacher of that
 kingdom, hath taught us that it is not meat and drink; know-
 Rom. 14. 14 ing and being perswaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is un-
 I Cor. 10 cleane in it self, and therefore willetth us to eat whatsoever is
 sold or set before us, without any scruple of conscience : we
 cannot henceforward (if you persist thus to teach) esteeme you
 herein for a Preacher of the kingdom of God, but of the rudiments of the Law ; and burdenous traditions ; yea, of the
 Doctrine of Devils (and so of the kingdom of Satan) as it is
 called by the holy Ghost, I Tim. 4. 1, 3.

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Again you should minde, that a general Doctrine (such as is that position of *Paul*, *Rom. 14. 17.*) may be applied to all particular times, places and persons, as occasion is offered; which if you will not learne of *Paul*, who applied thoe words of *David*, *The earth is the Lords*, &c. to his particular Doctrine of meats, whereas *David* himself never so alledg'd or applied them; yet learne it (at least wile) of your self, who a little before alledg'd the law of the damoed thing, from *Deut. 13*, against eating of meats offered to Idols, though it were not by *Moses* alledg'd to that end, neither can by any at this day be so applied, as before we shewed.

And as you teach contrary to *Paul's* Doctrine unto the *Romans*; so do you the like to that which he taught the *Corinthians*. For will you say unto us in *Amsterdam*, as he said to them in *Corinth*, *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat; and whatsoever is set before you by an unbeliever, eat making no question for conscience sake?* Then may we eat both blood and strangled, seeing some such things are often sold and set on Table before us. But you by your Letter would have us touch no Idolathites, eat no strangled, taste no blood; and this you teach as firme and a sure Doctrine to this day as any other testimony of holy Scriptures, to be observed of all the true faithful, till the coming of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

And if this be so, then it becometh us to ask many questions for conscience sake, otherwise then *Paul* taught. For we must enquire at the shambles touching every little beast & bird: that we buy, whether it were duely slaine or no, and the blood let out, according to the law, *Levit. 17. 13*. At every strangers table that we come, we must do the like, both for strangled things and blood, which often is mixed with other meats, especially of broths, wherein meat not thoroughly cleansed of the blood, is boiled: Yea, we must come to the Jews superstition, that buy not their flesh at the shambles of the Gentiles, but slay them themselves, for the perfect letting out the blood; for otherwise we may offend like the Israelites in the days of *Saul*, *1 Sam. 14. 32 33. 34*.

Thus as *Paul* taught a Doctrine of Christian liberty and comfort for the conscience in meats and drinks; so you teach a

Doctrine

1 Cor. 10

1 Cor. 10

Col. 2. 21

as Cor. 10

1 Cor. 10

29

Doctrine of bondage, yea of fear and doubt, and distraction of Soul (whiles you urge abstinence from these things, even as any other Doctrine of the Gospel.)

Mark 9.17
verse 22

1 Tim. 4. 1

Heb. 13. 9

The Lord Jesus which cast out that dumb spirit that rent and tare the possessed mans body, and threw him to the ground, and sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water; cast out by his grace this spirit of error from you, that thus distracteth and tortureth the conscience, and casteth it down to earthly traditions, and rudiments of the world. At the least, he preserve us and all his from it, and stablish our hearts with grace, not with meats, in which they have not been profited that have walked.

These things have we written (according to the measure of grace given unto us) for your good and reclaiming (if such be the will of God) which we desire: If not, yet for the confirmation of others in the truth and liberty of Christ, and discharge of our duties before him; who as he hath in mercie vouchsafed us the kingdom of his grace here on earth; so let him in like mercie give us and all his people in due time, the kingdom of his glory in the heavens. Amen.

Amsterdam,
Mon. 12. 7.
1602.

The Elders of the English Church
at *Amsterdam*, subscribing in the
name and with consent of the whole
Church.

Fran: Johnson. } *Daniel Studley.*
Henr: Ainsworth. } *Stanshal Mercer.*

FINIS.

